

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL BELIZE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 249158

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, BH

SUBJECT: WARREN K. BASS

REFS: (A) BELIZE 824, (B) STATE 239683

1. DEPTOFF DISCUSSED WARREN K. BASS AGAIN OCTOBER 5 WITH JOE P. JOHNSON, WHO IS SENIOR ASSOCIATE OF MARTIN RYAN HALEY AND ASSOCIATES (MRH). JOHNSON RECONFIRMED THAT BASS HAS NO BUSINESS CONNECTION WITH HIM OR WITH MRH, CONTRADICTING STATEMENT BY MINISTER HUNTER REPORTED REFTEL A.

2. JOHNSON STATED HE HAS BEEN ACQUAINTED WITH BASS SINCE 1966, SINCE BOTH WERE RESIDENTS OF LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, AND KNEW CONGRESSMAN WILBUR MILLS. HE HAS NEVER HAD ANY BUSINESS DEALINGS WITH BASS, HOWEVER. BASS AND HUNTER APPROACHED JOHNSON IN JULY AND REQUESTED THAT HE INVOLVE MRH IN PURSUING A NUMBER OF VAGUE BUT PURPORTEDLY HIGHLY PROFITABLE VENTURES ON BEHALF OF THE GOB. JOHNSON DECLINED TO COMMIT MRH UNTIL BASS COULD DOCUMENT NATURE OF HIS PROPOSALS. INFORMAL ORAL AGREEMENT WAS MADE THAT MRH WOULD CONSIDER SUCH ACTIVITIES FOR U.S. DOLLARS 50,000 ANNUAL RETAINER. BASS PRESENTED JOHNSON WITH CHECK FOR U.S. DOLLARS 10,000 EARNEST MONEY, BUT CHECK WAS RETURNED FOR INSUFFICIENT FUNDS. SECOND CHECK ALSO BOUNCED. JOHNSON
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STATED HE CALLED BASS APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK AGO AND TOLD

HIM MRH WOULD HAVE NOTHING MORE TO DO WITH HIM UNTIL AND UNLESS IT COULD BE ESTABLISHED THAT A SOLID BUSINESS PROPOSAL WAS INVOLVED. JOHNSON SAID BASS HAD "WORN OUT HIS WELCOME" AT MRH, AND HAD BEEN USING VARIOUS PEOPLE'S NAMES AROUND TOWN WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION, PLACING THEM IN EMBARRASSING POSITIONS.

3. JOHNSON DESCRIBED BASS, ON BASIS OF HIS LONG ACQUAINTANCE W-TH HIM, AS GENIAL BUT UNRELIABLE. HE SAID BASS HAS A REPUTATION IN LITTLE ROCK AS BEING "LOOSE AND EASY" IN HIS DEALINGS. THIS TENDS TO CONFIRM DEPARTMENT'S EARLIER JUDGMENT (REFTEL B) THAT BASS PROBABLY HAS VERY LITTLE TO OFFER THE GOB IN RETURN FOR THE RETAINER HE IS SEEKING.

4. CONGEN MAY DISCUSS SUBSTANCE THIS MESSAGE WITH PREMIER PRICE AT YOUR DISCRETION BUT SHOULD CAUTION THAT WE ARE PROVIDING INFORMATION AT REQUEST OF GOB AS SERVICE AND CAN TAKE NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR VERACITY OF JOHNSON'S STATEMENTS CONCERNING BASS' BONAFIDES. ROBINSON

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